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SAVE THE CHILDREN DAY, 1980

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CHILD AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES UNITED STATES SENATE

NINETY-SIXTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON

OVERSIGHT ON ISSUES OF CONCERN TO CHILDREN IN THE COMING DECADE

MAY 1, 1980

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SAVE THE CHILDREN DAY, 1980

THURSDAY, MAY 1, 1980

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CHILD AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT,
COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 11:08 a.m., in room 6226, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Senator Alan Cranston (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Senators Cranston and Percy.

Senator CRANSTON. The hearing will please come to order.

This morning, the Subcommittee on Child and Human Development will commemorate May 1, 1980, a day designated in over 40 States as "Save the Children Day," by hearing testimony from 22 very special witnesses. These witnesses, all under the age of 13, will present a "Children's Agenda for Action," compiled from thousands of letters written by children across the country. The letters, which are addressed to the 1980 Presidential candidates and which will be delivered to the candidates and both the Democractic and Republican platform committees, express the children's concerns about their lives and their country and their hopes for a better world. This hearing marks the second commemoration of May 1 in this manner by the subcommittee in recognition of a day symbolizing the love and concern for children which unites all people everywhere.

It is with great pleasure that I welcome all of the children here this morning, each and all of you—the witnesses and all the others. Your presence today is a symbol of the subcommittee's responsibilities. It is a visual reminder of our need to keep the welfare of children at the heart of every legislative action that we take. Our children represent our future as a nation and as a people.

I was impressed last year by our young witnesses' awareness of themselves as our successors and their genuine concern for issues that we might otherwise be inclined to consider as adult problems. I trust that this morning's hearing will be just as enlightening, and I hope that it will help Congress, and all policymakers, to remember our responsibilities to the generations who will follow us.

I would like to say that last year's hearing was the best hearing that I participated in all year—the most encouraging and exciting. [Applause.]

I anticipate that that will be the way it will be again today.

I would like to introduce Marjorie Benton, who is chairperson of the board of Save the Children, and I think she will make a few remarks at this point. Marjorie, we welcome you.

STATEMENT OF MARJORIE BENTON, CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, SAVE THE CHILDREN FEDERATION, INC.

Ms. BENTON. Thank you, Senator. On behalf of Save the Children Federation, we want to thank you very much for holding these hearings today.

Last year, on "Save the Children Day," we presented you with the first Children's Agenda for Action, and we asked you and your colleagues to consider children around the world when you talked about issues such as energy, pollution, inflation, war, and smoking. This year's agenda, compiled from over 16,000 children's letters, focuses on topics that we think are equally important—the needs of kids today.

Senator, I accepted the responsibility of chair of Save the Children because this agency shares my deep concern for kids. Our programs grow out of the conviction that children cannot be helped in isolation; their needs are met only when the needs of their families and their communities are met. Children cannot make it on their own. They need the help and support and care and, most of all, the love of their families, their communities, their teachers and their Government; all of the adults that touch their lives are important to children.

Last year, Senator, you spoke of the tremendous problems facing children, and last year you said that in all of your years as a U.S. Senator, it was the first time that you had asked questions and gotten simple and direct answers. [Laughter.]

Ms. BENTON. Now, this year, children from all over the United States, from rural communities and from suburban communities, from crowded cities, and isolated farmlands, have written you, expressing their thoughts on how best to help children today.

We thank you, Senator, for listening.

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you very much, Marjorie.

With us also today is Senator Charles Percy of Illinois, an outstanding Senator who is particularly interested in and involved in the matters that are before our committee today. It is a pleasure to introduce him.

Senator PERCY. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for convening these hearings. Though I am not a member of this particular subcommittee, and am chairing another hearing today, I would like to tell our witnesses that I was so deeply moved and impressed with the hearing we had last year that I wanted to attend again this year.

I am very proud, indeed, of my own constituent from Evanston, Ill., Marjorie Benton, who is chairperson of Save the Children, and of all her activities. I think this activity is most meaningful and will have long lasting effect. And I am also pleased that my brother-in-law, David Guyer, who is president of Save the Children, is here today to be a part of this program which he helped to arrange.

I know that when many people write to Congress they wonder whether or not Senators and Congressmen actually read their letters. You are one of the few groups that have ever had a chance to read your letters in person to the assistant majority leader of the U.S. Senate.

I want to personally pledge to you that when I testify before the Republican Platform Committee, when it holds its hearing in Chicago, Ill., I intend to personally take your letters to that committee and to deliver them before I give the testimony on the economy. I want them to know what kind of an economy they are building for the future of this country and the future of the world. I think your letters will be very moving and will have a great impact on them.

So I thank you very much for your personal appearance here today on behalf of all of the Republican Senators in this bipartisan hearing. I wish to express deep appreciation also to Senator Cranston for his longstanding interest in the field which is the future of America, the young people of this country. On "Children's Day," we all very much applaud you. [Applause.]

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you, Chuck. I would like to acknowledge the presence of Sir Noel and Lady Moynihan, chairpersons of the British Save the Children Fund from London. We are delighted that they are with us.

I would like also to introduce three of my staff members who are working on this committee today. They are, first, Ellen Butler, then Jenny Martinez, and Meghan Butler. We thank you very much for your help. We count on you to help us analyze the issues that are being presented to us. [Applause.]

Senator PERCY. Could the chairman state what the wages are of the members of the staff; are they at least minimum wage?

Senator CRANSTON. Well, it is going to make it difficult for us to keep the budget balanced, but we are going to do our best to maintain that.

Now, going to the panel. Do you wish to introduce the panel members, or shall I?

Ms. BENTON. They will introduce themselves, Senator.

STATEMENT OF EDMUND PAQUETTE, CHAPEL HILL, N.C.; UMI SCHLEGEL, ALEXANDRIA, VA.; EUGENE DEAS, WASHINGTON, D.C.; ALLISON JOLLY, WASHINGTON, D.C.; COURTNEY EDEN, ALDIE, VA.; JOHN WINDLEY, HAYES, VA.; SAMANTHA TATE, WASHINGTON, D.C.; AND ERIC L. TAYLOR, WASHINGTON, D. C., A PANEL

Master PAQUETTE. My name is Eddie Paquette, and I am 12 years old. I go to Frank Porter Graham School in Chapel Hill, N.C.

The Children's Agenda for Action, a children's platform for the 1980's: We, the children of the United States, urge our Nation's leaders to consider the issues which are important to children in the coming decade. We hope that your concern for children will result in action on some of the special problems which we face.

This is our Children's Agenda for Action. We give it to you, the Senate Subcommittee on Child and Human Development, on this day, May 1, 1980, "Save the Children Day."

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you very, very much. [Applause.]

Miss SCHLEGEL. My name is Umi Schlegel. I am 10 years old and go to Franconia Elementary School. I live in Alexandria, Va.

Food, housing, and health care: We know there are many children in this world who are not as lucky as we are. Children in Cambodia are starving, and many children are hungry. It is not

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right that any child must go without proper food, housing, or health care.

The United States is the most powerful country in the world. We believe that our country has a duty to help these children survive. We can send food to the starving and provide seeds, equipment, teachers, doctors, and nurses to the poor.

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

Master DEAS. My name is Eugene Deas. I go to Moten Elementary School. I am 11 years old, and I live in Washington, D.C.

Education: We realize that the quality of our education makes a difference in the kinds of jobs we will get when we become adults. Our teachers work hard, but it is difficult for us to get enough personal attention when our classes are so big. We also think a lot about the amount of work we have to do for school, but we do not seem to agree on this issue. Some of us think that there should be more homework and fewer vacations so that we will learn more and be better prepared for the future. Others think that there should be less homework and fewer school hours so that there will be free time for our other interests. [Applause.]

Miss JOLLY. My name is Allison Jolly. I am 11 years old. I am in the fifth grade. I go to Moten Middle School. I am from Washington, D.C.

Jobs: Because of inflation, our money does not go as far as it used to. Many of us are looking for part-time jobs, but there are few jobs open to children. Some of those jobs, like delivering newspapers, are being taken away from us and given to adults. Many of us babysit, mow lawns, and do chores at home to earn money, but our pay is low and has not increased with inflation. We would like to see more suitable jobs open up for children, and we believe that children should get paid the same amount as adults for similar work.

In some places, however, we have read that small children have to do very heavy work to help support their families. We believe children should not have to do work that is too hard for them. They should have time for school and play. [Applause.]

Miss EDEN. My name is Courtney Eden. I am in the fifth grade, and I am 11 years old, and I go to Loudoun Country Day School in Leesburg, Va.

Use of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco: Too many of us know children who drink, smoke or take drugs, and we think something has to be done to stop the sale of these things to children. Many of us believe that the drinking age should be raised to 21 so that fewer teenagers will be killed in car accidents.

We urge that there be much stronger penalties for people who sell marihuana and other drugs to our friends. Smoking is also a problem in our schools. The sale of cigarettes to children should be watched more carefully.

We think part of the problem is the lack of recreational activities in our towns. Perhaps new parks, clubs, and sports facilities would keep our friends away from these dangerous things. [Applause.]

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you very much.

Master WINDLEY. Hello. My name is John Windley, and I am 11 years old. I go to Gloucester Middle School in Gloucester, Va. I am going to talk about child abuse.

All of us agree that child abuse is terrible. We understand that sometimes we get on our parents' nerves, but we think that parents should control themselves. Many of us believe that parents should be put in jail if they are caught abusing a child. Others believe it is better to take the child away temporarily and give the parents counseling.

We have learned that children who are beaten by their parents often end up beating their own children. We think that child abuse must be stopped right now so that more young children are not hurt. [Applause.]

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you very much.

Miss TATE. My name is Samantha Tate, and I am 8 years old, and I am in the third grade at John Eaton School in Washington, D.C.

Other concerns: We believe that handicapped children need special attention and education. Many of our towns need more money for recreation programs, libraries, and books. Efforts should be made to give orphans caring and loving homes. [Applause.]

Master TAYLOR. Good morning. My name is Eric Taylor, and I attend Amidon Elementary School in Washington, D.C., and I am 10 years old.

This is our Children's Agenda for Action. It has been compiled by "Save the Children" from more than 16,000 letters from 48 States. We hope you will take action on these issues and keep them in mind as you prepare Government policies which will affect children.

Thank you. [Applause.]

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you all very much. Do not go yet.

Eugene, you said that you felt there should be perhaps a little less time in school and less homework so you could devote attention to other interests. What other interests would you devote time to, or do you think children should devote time to, if they spent less time at school?

Master DEAS. Like, looking for jobs and having time to do work around the house because your mother will need extra help—she cannot do everything by herself. [Applause.]

Senator CRANSTON. I want to call attention to this beautiful banner here that highlights the priorities of many children.

Do any of you have anything you would like to add to what you read to us about any issue or any problem? Yes?

Master WINDLEY. About the part about child abuse, I think they should have, like, something for children to tell the police, or something, that their parents are abusing them, and you should have, like, a telephone number, or something, toll-free, for those children who want to call the police and for those that need help, that want help, so they stop abusing their children.

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you, John, very, very much. [Applause.]

Master KIRK. Sir, these are the 16,000 letters that we have received.

[Presentation of letters to Senator Cranston.]

Senator CRANSTON. Wow, that is a lot of letters. [Laughter.] Thank you very much. [Applause.]

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Do any others of you have anything you would like to add to your testimony? Yes, Eric?

Master TAYLOR. What about birth control by the teenagers? They are having too many babies now.

Senator CRANSTON. What are you suggesting? [Laughter.]

Master TAYLOR. I suggest there has to be some kind of way so that teenagers could have a baby, but have a job, a home, a husband to take care of them, and everything.

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you; thank you very much. [Applause.]

I thank those of you on our first panel very, very much. If you will now make the seats available, the second panel will come forward. Thank you. [Applause.]

Unfortunately, we will not be able to read all of those letters here, but they will be delivered to the platform committees of our political parties.

I would like to ask Marjorie Benton if she would now lead off this panel.

STATEMENT OF KELLY McKEVITT, BOULDER, COLO.; ADRIAN C. VELTHUS, BOWIE, MD; SELENA KOK, WESTON, CONN.; RICHARD TAYLOR, WASHINGTON, D.C.; BROOKE JOHNSON, CHAPEL HILL, N.C.; CINDY AMBROSE, GLOUCESTER, VA.; AND KATHY LEDERER, WESTON, CONN., A PANEL

Miss McKEVITT. Hi. My name is Kelly McKevitt, and I am 12 years old. I am in the sixth grade and go to Heatherwood School. I live in Boulder, Colo. This is my letter:

Do you know the saying "all men are created equal"? Does that include kids? We do not have the right to vote, pass bills, take jobs, and become President. You also say we have freedom of speech. Not true. If we have ideas on the Iran crisis, air pollution, troops in Afghanistan, illegal smuggling of drugs, or the gas shortage, we have no way of getting them to Congress or expressing them.

What grownups do not understand is that these decisions will affect children more than adults, so we want to help.

If I were President, I would make a special congress for kids to help adults. Some people do not understand that we hear enough about each subject to think about them. Our ideas are good.

Sincerely,

KELLY McKEVITT.

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

Master VELTHUS. My name is Adrian Velthus, and I go to Holy Trinity Episcopal School in Bowie, Md., and I am reading the letter of Joseph Swidler from Pass Christian, Miss.

If I were elected President, this is how I would help children. I would help children by sending food and doctors to the children. The doctors would be to help the sick children, because they are weak and hungry and cannot fight off germs. The food would be to make them strong so they can defend themselves from germs and to nourish them.

P.S.—Young people are starving all over the world and they need our help. That is bad enough, but when we can help them and we do not, that is even worse.

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you. [Applause.]

Miss KOK. My name is Selena Kok, and I am from Weston Middle School in Weston, Conn. I am 10 years old and in the fifth grade. I am reading a letter from Kevin Nash, who is in the sixth grade in Brookwood School in Statesville, N.C.

A big problem in public schools is too many students and not enough teachers. When the teachers cannot control kids, they

cannot teach them. If you thin out students as low as 19 to 20 per teacher, and have smaller classrooms, then each teacher has more time to explain things to each student.

If I were elected President, I would come up with more educational TV programs. I would replace the low-rating television programs with fun, exciting, educational television programs. The exciting, fun part would catch the kids' attention while it would teach them.

Being a kid myself, I know the attraction to cartoons, but if I knew there were funnier shows on television, I would turn the channel and learn something too. Sincerely, Kevin Nash.

[Applause.]

Master TAYLOR. Hello. My name is Richard Taylor, and I go to Draper Elementary School and am in the sixth grade. I live in Washington, D.C. I am reading the letter from Jill Walton.

If I were elected President, this is how I would help children. I would try to see to it that the children 11 and older could get fairly easy jobs. I have found that when some kids around 11 or older want jobs, it is very hard for them to find them. Sometimes kids would like to get jobs to help themselves get things that they want. It seems more rewarding for you to buy something with your own money, or even save it for something you want later. Some kids are really responsible enough.

[Applause.]

Miss JOHNSON. I am Brooke Johnson from Frank Porter Graham Elementary School. I am in the sixth grade. I am from Chapel Hill, N.C. I am reading a letter from Greg Rollo, who lives in North Manchester, Ind.

If I were elected President, this is how I would help children. I would take older kids who took drugs and put them in special classes that teach them that drugs can kill people. I would talk to their parents and ask them if they know if their child is taking drugs, and take drugs away from them. Do not yell at them if they keep on taking drugs. Some of them want to stop, but their friends make them take drugs. I think you should have classes about drugs. Yours truly, Greg Rollo.

[Applause.]

Miss AMBROSE. I am Cindy Ambrose. My school is Gloucester Middle School in Gloucester, Va. I am reading a letter from Luanne Buhler.

DEAR CANDIDATES: Some people think we children are things that do not break, but we are not. We are just as good as them. But we really can get hurt. If I was elected President, I would put a stop to all that. I even heard about some dying. I am sure glad my parents are not like that.

We are people too, but smaller and not as smart. We can do some things that they cannot. But when we did it better, they get mad and hit and slap us around. I feel sorry for kids with parents like that. I think it is unfair. But I wish the people who do that would stop and think how much they are hurting us. If we did that to them, they would not like it.

Sincerely yours,

LUANNE BUHLER.

[Applause.]

Miss LEDERER. My name is Kathy Lederer, and I am 10. I am in the fifth grade in Weston Middle School, Weston, Conn. This letter was written by Tina Knupp, who is in the sixth grade at Delta Junction Elementary School, Delta Junction, Alaska.

If I were elected President, this is what I would do to help the children. I would lessen the amount of alcohol allowed to be bought at one time. I would also lessen

the amount of alcohol allowed in the home, because alcohol is a major cause of abuse of the children.

Sincerely,

TINA KNUPP.

[Applause.]

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you very, very much. Those were marvelous letters that you read so very well. I presume that they represent sort of a cross section of what all the letters would be.

Were those selected on a random basis? How did each of you happen to have the letter that you read? Was it just taken out of the pile or did you select it?

[No response.]

Senator CRANSTON. Does one of you want to answer? Yes, Adrian?

Master VELTHUS. Well, I had written another letter; however, it did not make it in. My person was not able to make it, so I read his letter.

Senator CRANSTON. Good. I would like to point out that when you were saying what you would do if elected President, that we have a system where the President can do a lot of things, but he cannot do everything. He has to consult the people of the country, and he has to consult the Congress. That is really the difference between a democracy like we have, where everybody can be involved and can help select the President or the leader, and a dictatorship, where there is one person who tries to be the boss and make all the decisions. In the United States we have Congressmen and Senators that share power and share in the decisionmaking with the President.

Many people who have been President have started out in some other office, like Governor or a State legislator or Member of the House or Senate, and then worked up to the President.

Do any of you think that you might enter politics, and hope you might be in the Congress or in the White House some day? Yes?

Master TAYLOR. I do, yes.

Senator CRANSTON. You do; good. I encourage you onward. It is a great way to lead a very satisfying life and to have a chance to contribute a great deal to others.

Yes, Adrian?

Master VELTHUS. Yes, I think I might possibly.

Senator CRANSTON. Good. Do any of you have anything to add to the letter you read—any thought you would like to express? Yes?

Master VELTHUS. I would like to concentrate on the people of Cambodia, the children. I think that this was a good point in the person's letter. However, I think that we should supply a certain amount of food to them, but also other countries should help to supply food to them.

Senator CRANSTON. Yes, focusing on the needs of those children who have such terrible, difficult problems of hunger, in Cambodia is a wonderful thing to be doing.

I would like to ask my staff if they have any questions that they would like to ask.

[No response.]

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you very, very much. It is great to have you with us. We will now invite the third panel forward. [Applause.]

Marjorie Benton, would you start the next panel?

Ms. BENTON. All right.

STATEMENT OF JANET OSORIO, NEW YORK, N.Y.; CHRIS FITZGERALD, ALEXANDRIA, VA.; CLARK BARRETT, WASHINGTON, D.C.; CHRISTINE FALTZ, NORTH MERRICK, N.Y.; ANNETTE WASIELEWSKI, WASHINGTON, D.C.; DARRIAN COWAN, WASHINGTON, D.C.; AND JASON SMITH, WASHINGTON, D.C., A PANEL

Miss OSORIO. My name is Janet. I am in the fourth grade. I am 10 years old. I live at 629 East Fifth Street. I am in a public school, P.S. 64.

If I were President, this is how I would help the children. I would have new books for them. I would have games on the playground and the best for them so that they would be very intelligent. I would give them food with vitamins, a classroom very clean and comfortable, and have teachers to take care of them on the playground and a nurse. Well, the thing is to have them well protected from everything.

Sincerely,

SONIA MORALES.

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you. [Applause.]

Master FITZGERALD. My name is Chris Fitzgerald. I am 11 years old. I am in the fifth grade. I go to Franconia Elementary School in Alexandria, Va. I am reading for Will Ryan. He is in the sixth grade; he goes to Trinity Catholic School in Tallahassee, Fla.

If I were elected President, the problems I would work on mostly would be the energy crisis, the hostages, Russia, the Shah, Afghanistan, the Olympics, and about nuclear power. But I do not think I will ever run for President, because I do not want so many responsibilities.

[Laughter and applause.]

Master BARRETT. My name is Clark Barrett. I am 10 years old, and I am in the fifth grade in Georgetown Day School in Washington, D.C. I am reading for Brian Notz, who is in the fourth grade in Campanelli School, Schaumburg, Ill., and he says:

If I were President, I would try to solve the problem of childhood diseases; in particular, the disease called leukemia. Leukemia is a poisoning of the blood. My brother had it. He died from it when he was 2 years old. I never got to meet my brother. He died before I was born.

I feel that all children should have just the same amount of years to live as adults. If my brother had lived, perhaps we could have been locksmiths like my father. Money should be spent to build more hospitals for diseases as leukemia, and more time should be set aside to experiment with different medicines. If this had been done, maybe they could have saved my brother.

[Applause.]

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you very much.

Miss FALTZ. My name is Christine Faltz. I go to Camp Avenue School in North Merrick, N.Y. This is my letter.

If I were President, this is how I would help children. Save children, starving Cambodians: I would propose that some little group be organized to collect funds. These funds for the people of Cambodia would serve for buying food, clothing, medicine. I think that it certainly is a pity that those poor people perish when we could help them.

Child abuse: I do not like the idea of child abuse. If I were President, I would propose that the House of Representatives and the Senate pass a law that child abuse was illegal; then, if anybody was caught breaking the law, they would be sent to jail.

Drugs: I think drugs should be illegal—all drugs. Children should be healthy. I am not only talking about children taking drugs; I am also talking about women taking drugs. If they do, their children might, just might, be born with no arms or legs, or be blind, deaf, mute. I want all new drugs tested. I want them tested properly.

Please, take your time to save the children. Thank you. [Applause.]

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you, Christine. I would like to say that I am glad you recognize that the Congress, the House and the Senate, have to pass laws in order for the President to be able to do certain things.

I would like to tell you that I share the interest that you and others have expressed in child abuse, and I have been working on legislation that we hope will help deal with the terrible problem of child abuse.

Thank you very much. [Applause.]

Miss WASIELEWSKI. My name is Annette Wasielewski. I am 12 years old. I am in the sixth grade, and I attend Amidon Elementary School in Washington, D.C. I am reading the letter of Cecilia Pohorille. She is in the fifth grade, Ward School, New Rochelle, N.Y.

DEAR PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES: Here in New Rochelle, N.Y., the food I eat is nothing but the best, because the USRDA cares so much about our health.

We have more than a hundred health societies in the United States. We even have doctors to help us live our lives better. I hope that I have made it clear that the United States cares about my health and about everybody else's—well, almost everybody else's.

Have we ever thought about caring for other people, such as the children all over the world? Children are dying all over the world because of malnutrition, not enough food, shelter, and clothing.

We are one of the richest countries in the world, and the only thing we care about is showing movies about how poor countries are. Tell me, is there something wrong with that? Yes. It goes to prove that the United States only cares about showing disaster films. The children in these films hope that the people watching will do something to help them so that they will live a better life, but we just watch and feel pity for them, and that is all.

If I were elected President, I would stop the films and start with the action. That is what these kids need—more action. Even a loaf of stale bread will make them happy. What we need is more community work. If any adults care enough to help these kids, please do, because remember this world will be in our hands like it is in yours.

Sincerely,

CECILIA POHORILLE.

[Applause.]

Master COWAN. I am Darrian Cowan. I am in the eighth grade. I go to Browne Junior High School. I am reading my own story; I am talking about Save the Children.

If I were elected, I would help them by giving them food and good homes. I would take them to the doctor for a checkup and at the dentist, and sometimes I would take them to the zoo and carnivals.

I would buy them new clothes, shoes, and socks to wear. If there are thousands of them and I would not have enough to support them, I would try to get someone to help.

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you very much.

Master SMITH. My name is Jason Smith. I am 9 years old, and I attend Whittier School. I am reading Brooke Carlson's letter. He is

the third grade, and he goes to Chautauqua Central School in Chautauqua, N.Y.

DEAR CANDIDATES: I am concerned about every child. I feel that every child should have a home, a place to live. What do you think? Do you care?

Yours truly,

BROOKE CARLSON.

[Applause.]

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you all very much. I think we now do have a staff question.

Miss MARTINEZ. What would you do about the hostages in Iran?

Senator CRANSTON. If any one of you would like to try to answer that question—what would you do about the hostages in Iran. Yes?

Master BARRETT. I believe that the situation with the hostages is a very bad problem, and we could help by—if we tried, maybe, to ignore them for a little while, ignore the Iranians trying to get us to, you know, pay them for the hostages, or whatever they want for the hostages, they would get a little bored of keeping the hostages there, because what a hostage is is something that—if nobody cares about them, then they have lost all their value. So if we could try that, it would not be very good for the hostages, in that they would be very frightened, but we have tried very many things, and that might be one of the things we could do.

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you very much. [Applause.]

It would be good for the hostages if it led to their being released by those who are holding them.

You had a suggestion, did you not, Jason?

Master SMITH. If I was President, I would send the Shah back to Iran and get the hostages back.

Senator CRANSTON. Did you have a suggestion, Annette?

Miss WASIELEWSKI. I think one of the problems is it costs them money to keep the hostages there—for their food and whatever they need to survive—and I think that is one of their mistakes. They should have had more backup with the helicopters and the planes that they were sending to Iran.

Senator CRANSTON. Chris, you listed many problems and said there were so many that you did not think you would like to be President. One problem you mentioned was Afghanistan. What would you do about that if you were in charge?

Master FITZGERALD. I do not really have anything.

Senator CRANSTON. Does anybody else have a thought? Yes?

Master SMITH. I would send some American troops to Afghanistan with our American champions.

Senator CRANSTON. Does anybody else have any other thoughts about Afghanistan? Yes?

Master BARRETT. Well, we have already told the Soviet troops to get out of Afghanistan, I believe. We could, if they are not getting out, send in some of our troops to help back up the Government so they will not be taken over. I think that is a good idea on what to do about Afghanistan. It is just a thought.

Senator CRANSTON. Does anybody else have any comment on that issue?

[No response.]

Senator CRANSTON. What about other problems that were not reflected in the letters that are of concern to you? Do you have any suggestions to make on any other matter? Yes?

Miss WASIELEWSKI. The environment—you know, when people throw trash around, and the planes dump so much pollution, and everything. They should have a system so electrically these things can run. And I think it is a good idea that they put fines on people who litter and throw trash around, because it kills animals and wildlife and trees, and it could kill us, because if we do not have animals and wildlife and stuff, then we cannot get along. So I think that is one of the important issues that they should bring up, too.

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you very much. This is sort of like a town hall of America, and in town halls of America, everybody has a chance to speak. If there are any young people who are present who were not on one of the panels and who have some idea they would like to express—I thought I saw one hand go up a little bit ago—I would be very glad to recognize you. Yes, back there?

A CHILD. When they have wars and stuff, lots of people get killed. And people in America, when they are murdered—the murderer usually goes to jail or will be killed himself. So I think it is just as bad if you send them to fight in a war, because there is a very good chance they will get killed.

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you very much. Yes?

Master VELTHUS. Your staff asked what a person would do if they were elected President and how they would act on the Iranian crisis. Well, I have come to the knowledge that taking hostages is the custom of the Iranians, because in the early days, the Iranians would have their sons taken hostage by the French or the king that they were fighting against so they would be protected from going to war.

Senator CRANSTON. Way over by the window, yes?

A CHILD. I think there should be bicycle trails on all right sides of the public highways.

Senator CRANSTON. Good. I do, too. [Applause.]

A CHILD. On the Iranian crisis, I think it was a good idea when we brought in the helicopters and tried to rescue them, but I would have had more helicopters and just sort of, like, have troopers just parachute on the embassy, and then have—I do not know—put about 50 more ships around Iran, and they would probably give up. Or, those Iranians, they would probably want money more than anything, so you could give them money for each hostage. The Government could probably cough that up from taxes. [Laughter.]

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you. Yes?

A CHILD. I would like Congress to give the public school more money for the teachers and students. [Applause.]

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you. Yes?

A CHILD. I tend to disagree with one of the things he said about giving the Shah back to Iran, because if we give the Shah back to Iran, then Iran will think that they can get anything from us, and that will cause us to be blackmailed, and some of us who are U.S. citizens do not want to be blackmailed. So it is better to slowly give the Shah back and slowly get our hostages back so we will not be blackmailed.

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you. Yes?

A CHILD. One of the members of the panel mentioned that we should send troops to help Afghanistan. If we did that, our problems with Russia might become worse and a war could be started.

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you very much. Yes?

A CHILD. Since they are bringing so many Cubans over here, why can they not bring children over here to help them?

Senator CRANSTON. Yes, back there?

A CHILD. I think the United States did the right thing with the Shah, because if we took the Shah out of our country and gave him back to Iran, they might have killed him or taken him to jail, or done something like that. He was like a friend of the United States. You would not want to throw your friend out of your house, would you?

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you. Yes?

A CHILD. One of the ideas that I stressed in my letter was that if I was President, I really would not live in the White House, because, really, it just costs too much to run it.

Senator CRANSTON. You sound like the Governor of California. [Laughter.]

A CHILD. And, also, with all that money saved—well, first, I would have started this campaign to help needy children and fix up broken-up houses, and all, and with all that money saved, you just donate it to that campaign for things like that.

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you. Yes?

A CHILD. One of the problems is that we are depending too much on foreign oil. If we started using more of our own resources, we would not have to buy so much from them and we would not have to spend that much money on foreign oil.

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you. Yes?

A CHILD. Talking about money for elementary schools, and stuff, they should stop making rockets to go to the Moon, and stuff like that, and have more money for schools and get better equipment in the hospitals.

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you. Yes.

A CHILD. Why should Iran want the Shah back when the Shah is going to die of cancer?

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you. Yes?

A CHILD. Well, I think that Jimmy Carter should have warned us about having an attempt to free the hostages, because a lot of people were mad and angry because he did not warn us and it did not work. But I am glad that he at least tried to have the hostages saved.

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you. Over by the window again.

A CHILD. I think we should give the Shah back for the hostages and then sneak the Shah back out. [Laughter.]

Senator CRANSTON. Yes?

A CHILD. I think we should send the Shah back, and then they might give us back the hostages.

Senator CRANSTON. Yes?

A CHILD. I think that we should put more lights on the highways, because there are some mean people out there that will break the—that will throw a stone at the lights when you are driving on the highway and break the lights, and if you cannot see, then you cannot drive.

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you. Yes?

A CHILD. I think the Iranians in America—the Americans should hold them hostage and then tell the Ayatollah Khomeini that if they give our hostages back, we will give theirs back.

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you. Yes?

A CHILD. If Iran wants to have the Shah back, and they have 50 hostages—they just want the Shah so they can kill him for the 50 hostages, but it does not seem fair because the Shah is going to die anyway.

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you. Yes?

A CHILD. I think we should try to produce more gasohol and gas stations than we have.

Senator CRANSTON. Thanks. Yes?

A CHILD. I would like to ask you a question. What do you think would happen if the hostages in Iran were kept there and the Shah would die; what do you think would happen to the hostages?

Senator CRANSTON. I do not really know the answer to that question. But you are not supposed to ask us questions. [Laughter.]

You are supposed to give us advice; we need that very badly, and that is why we are having this meeting.

Yes?

Miss WASIELEWSKI. I think they should use more tax money to put our own ships and drills and everything into the sea to get more oil, because I know there is more out there, and they should use more tax money for that.

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you. Christine, yes?

Miss FALTZ. I think that they should lower the gas prices, and I disagree that they should get oil from the sea because it is very expensive, and so they should lower the gas prices and the oil prices, too.

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you very much. Yes?

Master KIRK. I think that we should stop buying so much oil and gas from other countries and use the oil and gas that we have in America.

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you. Yes?

Miss TATE. I think we should use our oil when we really need it, not when we just want to.

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you. Jason?

Master Smith. I think that President Carter should have planned his rescue before he even started the thing.

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you. Back in the window.

A CHILD. I think it is like saying we will give you $5,000 all cash or a $5,000 piano. It is like saying we do not know which way to turn to.

Senator CRANSTON. Yes?

A CHILD. I think that poor people should have homes.

Senator CRANSTON. Yes?

A CHILD. Iran does not want the Shah back. They just want to test us and see how much power we have against them.

Senator CRANSTON. Way over there?

A CHILD. I think the Iranians are kind of crazy, because they have been holding our hostages and they are threatening to blow up an embassy in London. I think the Iranians really need some help. [Laughter.]

Senator CRANSTON. Yes? The girl in the green, yes?

A CHILD. I would like to thank the people that organized this meeting, because the children are now talking about their opinions on the Iranians and Afghanistan, and all these other kinds of problems. [Applause.]

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you. Christine?

Miss FALTZ. Since London is trying to help us, I think that we should work together to get our hostages back.

Senator CRANSTON. Right. Yes, over there?

A CHILD. I think that Carter's attempt to get our hostages back was very good, except he should have had a backup for the persons so that they could have gone on with the mission to get our hostages back.

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you. Yes, way in the back?

A CHILD. About the hostages, if we start turning against Iran and stop selling the oil to them, the Iranian people would slowly start starving and they will give us our hostages back, because they need oil for their country.

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you. Yes.

A CHILD. If Iran wants the Shah back, why do they not just come and get him? [Laughter.]

Senator CRANSTON. Yes?

Master VELTHUS. Well, I personally have a friend that used to be in Iran, and the party has told me that you cannot trust an Iranian, and so that if we did give them the Shah, it would be a rare thing that they would give us the hostages.

Senator CRANSTON. Yes?

Miss WASIELEWSKI. I think that we should not mingle with the Soviets, or anything, because if they start getting angry with the United States, they have twice as many battleships and weapons and ammunition as we do. So, you know, we might as well as forget it, if we start a war with them.

Senator CRANSTON. Yes?

A CHILD. I do not think we should give the Shah back, because if we give the Shah back, they will kill him. If they give us our U.S. people, we will not kill them, but if we just get the hostages back, I mean it will be like killing the Shah, and the hostages are OK over there; it is just that they want to come home.

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you. Senator Percy has been inspired now so that he has a question.

Senator PERCY. I would like to tell you, first of all—I am going to ask you to vote on something—very many of the votes that we have in the Senate are done just by voice vote. The President of the Senate, the presiding officer, when we are ready for the issue, says, "All those in favor, say aye," and then you say aye if you support it; "those opposed, say nay," and then he pauses and says, "It appears as though the ayes, or the nays, have it," and if no one objects, then he says, "That is it," and the vote is over.

Let me ask you just a couple of questions, then, to get your views on several issues, as we have had to take positions.

Equal rights for women: It is proposed that there be an amendment to the Constitution providing equal rights for women. Do you favor it, or are you opposed to such a constitutional amendment?

I will ask the question, all of those in favor, and then I will say, "say aye."

OK. Are you ready for the question? Have you made your minds up? All of those who favor an amendment to the Constitution providing equal rights for women, ERA, "say aye."

[A chorus of ayes.]

Senator PERCY. All those opposed, "say nay."

[No response.]

[Applause.]

Senator PERCY. It appears that the ayes have it.

I hope that the Illinois State Legislature listens to this, because all of those under 60 might be voting for them sometime soon, and they better get the message that you unanimously want to see ERA.

Now, let me ask this question.

Senator CRANSTON. May I for 1 second point out that my own State of California was one of the very first States to ratify ERA, and I am proud of that. [Applause.]

Senator PERCY. Well, I am very proud that I served part of my naval career in California. [Laughter.]

But Illinois has yet to do this, and I wish that it would.

I would like to put to you just one more question. Let us assume that this country is under attack somehow, Similarly to Pearl Harbor—a real emergency. I oppose the draft and reinstituting the draft. I think the voluntary military force is working, and should continue.

But if we have an emergency and it is necessary to have a draft, do you think we should draft women as well as men?

Are you ready for the question? All those in favor of drafting women as well as men, "say aye."

[A chorus of ayes.]

Senator PERCY. All those opposed, "say nay."

[A chorus of nays.]

Senator CRANSTON. I am not sure which side won.

Senator PERCY. There is a little indecision among the judges here. I am going to ask our three aides to be judges now, and this [indicating] is the signal to Senator Cranston and myself if it is aye, and this [indicating] if it is nay. Listen carefully.

Now, if you really believe in this, "say aye" so if you really mean it; do not just whisper it as some of you did.

All those in favor, if there is an emergency in this country and we have to have a draft, of drafting women as well as men, "say aye."

[A chorus of ayes.]

Senator PERCY. All those opposed, "say nay."

[A chorus of nays.]

Senator CRANSTON. What do you think; how did it come out? Is it yes or no?

[No response.]

Senator PERCY. It seems like a standoff. I would like to only say, from my standpoint, what is good for the goose is good for the gander. [Laughter.]

If you want equal rights, then you better have equal responsibilities. And if there is a national emergency, as in Israel, women are

proud to serve their country. Do not forget that 95 percent of all jobs in the military can be performed just as well by women as well as men. So I am with those of you who voted aye.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much.

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you. [Applause.]

Let us try to resolve that by a show of hands, which is another way of voting, and we do that in the Senate, too.

So all in favor of drafting women as well as men, raise your hands. Only young people. We will not try to count, but just take an estimate.

[There was a show of hands.]

Senator CRANSTON. All right. All those opposed to drafting women, raise their hand.

[There was a show of hands.]

Senator CRANSTON. Oh, the ayes have it.

Senator PERCY. I would like to think that I swayed a few votes. [Laughter.]

Senator CRANSTON. Sometimes it happens that way in the Senate; when you do not have to be identified as to how you are going to vote, sometimes people will vote one way and then, when you are identified on a show of hands or rollcall, it turns out very differently. It is interesting that this worked the same way.

I think we have time for, let us say, three more questions, so the first three hands up I am going to call on, and then we are going to have to stop. OK. I see them. You, again.

Miss WASIELEWSKI. If the women are in a position that they cannot battle if an emergency came up, they could still work with electronics and fix the machinery or help with—not in battle, man-to-man battle, but just helping.

Senator CRANSTON. Back down in the middle aisle, there was a hand raised.

[No response.]

Senator CRANSTON. Then, over there, the hand with the blue sleeve. [Laughter.]

A CHILD. I think the Iranians are crazy, because if they want hostages, they can just take their own people.

Senator CRANSTON. Over here; this is the last one. Yes?

A CHILD. Going back to the Iranian problem, if we try and surround them, then Russia would jump in in Iran and use nuclear power.

Senator CRANSTON. Thank you very much. I would like to say that you have been marvelous in having so many ideas, so many suggestions, so many thoughts. It has really been very much like it is in the country and in the Senate. There are different ideas and very contrary views expressed on what to do about Iran or Afghanistan or other problems that confront us, and that is the way a democracy works. We have all the different views and thoughts expressed, and then eventually we vote, and then we try to act in accordance with what the majority view is among those who have been elected to make those decisions in the House of Representatives, in the Senate and in the White House, along with the decisions at the local level in the communities where you live by people elected to city or county or other forms of local government.

It has been great to be with you and to have you with us. I am very grateful to all of you for your participation. I thank the Save the Children Foundation, which has done such marvelous work in so many ways for children who need help and who need inspiration and guidance, for their marvelous help and for their participation and assistance in this session. Marjorie Benton, I thank you and, through you, all others who have helped. Thank you a great, great deal.

We now stand adjourned. [Applause.]

[Whereupon, at 12:13 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

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